

I strongly believe Alaska should join the list of states that have humane end of life statutes in place and urge you to pass this bill. I wanted to testify in person, but unfortunately have had laryngitis for over a week.

Five states have Death with Dignity statutes:

California (End of Life Option Act; 2016) Colorado (End of Life Options Act; 2016) Oregon (Oregon Death with Dignity Act; 1994/1997)

Vermont (Patient Choice and Control at the End of Life Act; 2013) Washington (Washington Death with Dignity Act; 2008)

Until my parents went through terrible suffering, I had not given much thought to the choices that were or were not available to us humans. I'd been raised in ranching country where any beloved animal that was terminally sick or had untreatable injuries, was put down.

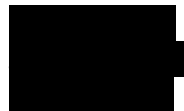
My Mother was moved to a nursing home in Colorado after I moved to Alaska. At age 89 she became bed-ridden because her bones were not strong enough to support her weight. Once while being moved she fell, one leg broke and bone went through the skin. Gangrene set in. Her constitution was such that she could not live through an operation. Her leg, which had a large open sore, would not heal. She wanted to die and refused to drink anything, but they kept her alive with intravenous liquids.

My sister asked the doctor to give her something to end her suffering, but he said it was not god's will. Mother stayed in that condition several weeks before she died. Colorado did not yet have its End of Life Options Act.

My sister and I will never get over our own agony in remembering the last days of our once proud and dignified Mother.

At 91 my Father realized that due to his balance problems and failing health, he couldn't stay out on his ranch alone any longer. We sold it and moved him to an assisted living facility. Within a few months he got bored with their routines and restrictions. He moved to a motel. He called me in AK and said he'd had a wonderful, useful and active life, but there was nothing more to live for. He feared he was going to be made to move to a nursing home and just exist 'til the end,' as Mother had. He wanted to end it. I said I understood but didn't know what he could do other than talk to a doctor to see if one could help him. No one would, so he ended his misery by shooting himself in the head. He was 92.

Susan Arthur



My name is Dale Judge. I've lived in Alaska since 1972. I am a colon cancer survivor. I know what it's like to be near death's door. In 2014 I was diagnosed with Stage III-B next to terminal. I had major chemo, radiation and surgery. I know what it's like to be deathly sick. I have some glimpse of what terminally ill people experience. I was so sick and felt so terrible that life was not good. I could have committed suicide, but I didn't. The bill permits assisted suicide and I am against it. We have too many people in Alaska killing themselves already.

This bill is one more example of not valuing human life. There are many choices besides suicide. You know them all: pain control, hospice, etc. Saying it's legal to help someone who's 18 take their own life is disgusting. Not telling relatives that they're going take their own life is.....(I can't find the right words.) People's emotions are at extreme levels when sick. The next day after death they could have decided to stay alive. New treatments are being developed all over the world. This legislation opens all types of possibilities for abuse: undue influence from family, "friends", and doctors. It is not possible to put enough restrictions in this legislation to prevent lives lost that could have been saved. This is a very bad bill. Please vote it down. Thank you.

Dale Judge

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